City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	Lafayette City Council
By:	Jennifer Russell, Parks, Trails & Recreation Director Jonathan Katayanagi, Recreation Program Coordinator
Date Written:	November 26, 2008
Meeting Date:	December 8, 2008
Subject:	**Lafayette Bike Park**

INTRODUCTION

BMX and mountain bike jumping (non-motorized bike sports) have been steadily growing over the past ten years; so much so that BMX was featured in the 2008 Olympic Games. Much like the current trend of skate parks across the country, the demand for bike jump parks is on the rise. Many cities have or are building parks of their own. For years bike riders have been building unauthorized jumps in the Lafayette Community Park. As the popularity of the sport grew, so did the size and number of the jumps local riders would build. The jumps grew to the point that, in order to expand their jump site, riders began building closer and closer to the Las Trampas Creek bed causing damage to trees and banks. Park maintenance staff has repeatedly removed these sites within the park, frustrating the bike jumpers and resulting in new bike jumps being built in other undesirable locations. The nearest bike jump park is run by the City of Pleasanton. This park was built because the City was faced with a situation similar to Lafayette's and found that giving the riders a place to enjoy their sport was the best solution.

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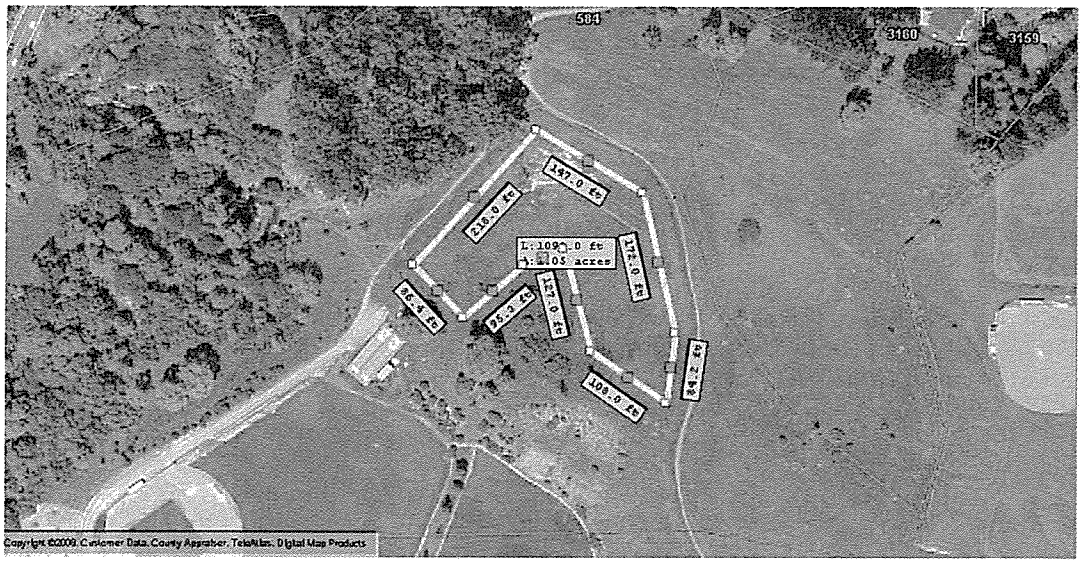
Recreation Program Coordinator Jonathan Katayanagi began a dialog with our local BMX riders. The result was the formation of the Lafayette Bike Jumps Users Group. This group has been meeting and doing extensive research on other city bike parks in hopes of adding a bike jump park to the Lafayette Community Park. They studied existing bike parks in Aptos, San Jose, Pleasanton, Fresno and Folsom.

A comprehensive report was presented to the Lafayette Parks Subcommittee and then the entire Parks, Trails and Recreation (PTR) Commission. After questions and discussion, the Commission was in full support of moving forward with a Bike Park project in the Lafayette Community Park at the identified site.

BIKE PARK SITE

City Staff, the PTR Commission and knowledgeable BMX participants have identified approximately one acre in the Lafayette Community Park for a bike jump facility. Attached is a map showing the site location in the South End of the park, just behind the batting cages. The South End is the Community Park area designated for active recreational use. The site is essentially non-vegetated land that is clear of the riparian zone and well below the ridgeline. Restrooms, drinking fountains, access trails and parking are close by making this a very suitable location. The current fire road would border the proposed site providing easy access for construction and grading equipment. There is currently a water line that runs to the batting cages; close enough to provide water at the base of the site for bike jump construction and ongoing maintenance.



LIABILITY

None of the cities with bike parks carry extra liability insurance. The Municipal Pooling Authority (Lafayette's liability insurance) has sent documentation showing that the City would be covered for this kind of park, so long as they met the under writing requirements similar to the requirements in "Endorsement Number 4". These requirements include:

- The City adopting procedures and requirements to ensure the safety of participants;
- A park that is engineered and designed in compliance with ABA/NBL guidelines;
- The Authority approving the design;
- Constructing a barrier between participants and spectators;
- Posting signs with the appropriate usage guidelines and warnings pursuant to Government Code 831.7;
- Establishing a mechanism to enforce park rules, including set hours of operation, and required use of safety apparel and bike padding;
- All organized events being supervised, and the City assuring purchase of liability insurance through the sanctioning body; and
- Routine inspections and maintenance of the Bike Park, and such activity documented.

DESIGN PHASE

The PT&R Department would hire an experienced design firm to work with the Parks Subcommittee, the Park Improvement Advisory Group (PIAG) and The Bike Jump User Group to determine the scope of the Bike Park. The design will lay out the bike runs and jumps, and which areas are designated for beginner, intermediate and advanced level riders. This includes the flow of the park as riders go from feature to feature. The design will likely include a grading plan, fence and gate locations, spectator areas, equipment storage area, water connections and a signage plan. The Signage Plan includes the park rules signs and skill level/feature signs (informative for riders and guidelines for builders). The dirt onsite may not provide a suitable mix of clay and sand for building jumps, and some soil may need to be imported.

An important aspect of the Bike Park is for the users to build and maintain the jumps. They have asked for this responsibility. This creates a strong sense of ownership and bonding from this volunteer activity. It also allows the users to adjust the jumps as needed over time. The cost for construction and maintenance is reduced. PTR staff will oversee and inspect the jump construction to ensure reasonable safety and consistency with the design plan.

After visiting and talking to the cities who have built their own bike parks, an experienced design firm was discovered: Hilride Progression Development Group. This experienced firm puts a lot of emphasis on skill progression parks. Their park designs offer a variety of features for different bike riding interests and abilities, including jumps, tracks, elevated trails, log rides and appropriate signage. Their services also include website design and volunteer coordination. Hilride can also provide project management services.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

After the design is completed, the Planning Department will review the environmental impacts and provide feedback to staff so that the project meets CEQA requirements.

PROJECT COSTS

The following is a preliminary estimate of the Bike Park costs for the first phase. This phase includes the grading, fencing, jump building/maintenance equipment and equipment storage. The will likely be parts of the design that will be built later at an additional cost. This will be determined during the design process. As part of the design, Hilride will prepare a more detailed phasing proposal and cost estimates.

Design & Construction Management	$13,000
Fencing	$30,000
Grading	$40,000
Materials	$5,000
Maintenance Tools and Storage	$7,500
Subtotal	$95,500
10% Contingency	$9,500
Total	**$105,000**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission's recommendation to incorporate this project, estimated at $105,000, into its 2008-09 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). There are sufficient revenues to cover this cost since two projects in the approved CIP[1] have been delayed—North End trail weatherization and Murray Lane Path—an estimated $350,000 reduction in the budgeted expenditures.

2. Authorize staff to enter into a contract with Hilride Progression Development Group to design a Lafayette Bike Park within the Lafayette Community Park.

cc: PTR Commission; Planning Services Manager

[1] Approved by the City Council on June 9, 2008, and reflected in the City's 2008-09 budget.